

REMARKS

This application has been carefully reviewed in light of the Office Action dated November 27, 2006. Claims 1 to 3, 6 to 18, 21 to 32 and 34 to 36 are pending in the application, of which Claims 1, 16, 30 and 34 to 36 are independent. Reconsideration and further examination are respectfully requested.

As an initial matter, Applicants thank the Examiner for his indication of allowable subject matter in Claims 4, 5, 9 to 14, 19, 20, 24 to 28 and 33.

Claim 35 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 101 because the claimed invention is allegedly directed to non-statutory subject matter. Without conceding the correctness of the rejection, Claim 35 has been amended herein to clarify that it is directed to computer-executable program instructions stored on a computer-readable storage medium. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and withdrawal of this rejection.

Claims 1, 3, 8, 16, 18, 23 and 30 were rejected under 35 U.S.C § 102(e) over U.S. Published Appln. No. 2002/0186421 (Tachibana). Claims 34 to 36 were rejected under 35 U.S.C § 102(b) over JP 6-139031. Claims 2, 6, 7, 17, 21, 22 and 32 were rejected under 35 U.S.C § 103(a) over Tachibana. Claims 15 and 29 were rejected under 35 U.S.C § 103(a) over Tachibana in view of JP 6-139031.

In keeping with indication of allowable subject matter, the substance of Claim 4 has been incorporated into independent Claims 1, 16, 30 and 34 to 36, and Claim 4 has been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer of subject matter. Therefore Applicants submit that Claims 1, 16, 30, 34, and 36 are fully in condition for allowance, and respectfully request same.

The foregoing amendments to the claims have been made without prejudice or disclaimer of subject matter, and without conceding the correctness of the rejections, but rather strictly to obtain an earlier allowance thereof.

The other pending claims in this application are each dependent from the independent claims discussed above and are therefore believed allowable for at least the same reasons. Because each dependent claim is also deemed to define an additional aspect of the invention, however, the individual consideration of each on its own merits is respectfully requested.

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, the entire application is believed to be in condition for allowance, and such action is respectfully requested at the Examiner's earliest convenience.

Applicants' undersigned attorney may be reached in our Costa Mesa, California office at (714) 540-8700. All correspondence should continue to be directed to our below-listed address.

Respectfully submitted,

/Frank Cire #42,419/
Frank L. Cire
Attorney for Applicants

FITZPATRICK, CELLA, HARPER & SCINTO
30 Rockefeller Plaza
New York, New York 10112-3800
Facsimile: (212) 218-2200